[Sri M. Bhaktavatsalam] [15th November 1961

Representations were received by Government from agriculturists in April this year drawing attention to the decrease in jaggery prices and the resulting hardship to jaggery manufacturers. In these representations, it was generally submitted that export restrictions on jaggery should be removed by Government of India in order to alleviate the hardship. Inquiries were therefore made and it was learnt that there is no restriction imposed by Government of India on the export of jaggery but that restrictions have been imposed by the importing countries, mainly Ceylon, on import of jaggery. Ceylon has imposed restrictions on imports of other things from India also mainly due to its adverse balance of trade with our country. Under these circumstances, it was not possible for getting any relaxation on import restrictions imposed by a foreign country. The only alternative appeared to be to explore the possibilities of other markets for jaggery. The Government of India was addressed in this connection and that Government consulted their trade representatives abroad. The Central Government informed us that replies received from their trade representatives were not so encouraging as to enable marketing of jaggery in foreign countries.

The price of cane jaggery was maintaining a rising trend from 1956 till December 1960. The price started declining from January 1961 onwards. During the period the price was rising, the ryots planted large areas under sugarcane.. The price had in fact reached a stage where cultivators showed a preference for manufacturing jaggery rather than selling sugarcane to sugar mills. It was unlikely that this price level could have been maintained for very long, but the slump has been accentuated by import restrictions in other countries. The Government of India have recently promulgated an ordinance for reducing the production of sugar during the 1961–62 season due to surplus sugar stocks on hand in the country. We fear that this ordinance will further aggravate the position in the jaggery market. The implications of that ordinance are however being considered by Government separately.

III.—GOVERNMENT BILLS

(1) THE MADRAS GIFT GOODS (UNLAWFUL POSSESSION) BILL, 1961.

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM : Sir, I move—

"That leave be granted for the introduction of the Madras Gift Goods (Unlawful Possession) Bill, 1961."

DEPUTY SPEAKER : The question is—

"That leave be granted for the introduction of the Madras Gift Goods (Unlawful Possession) Bill, 1961."

The motion was put and carried and leave was granted.

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM : I introduce the Bill, Sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER : The Bill is introduced.